Budget Earmarked for Sports

1613. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of total Central Budget and Budget for HRD earmarked for sports;

(b) the percentage of total Eighth Plan and that of HRD in the Eighth Plan earmarked for sports;

(c) whether the amount is sufficient to develop sports in the country;

(d) whether sports have been given low priority in the schools and colleges; and

(e) if not, the present status of sports in schools and colleges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS) (SHRI R. DHANUSHKODI ATHITHAN): (a) The sports budget is about 0.036% of the total Central Budget and about 1.63% of the total Budget for HRD, as per the Budget Estimates of 1996-97.

(b) About 0.08% of total Eighth Plan allocation and about 0.90% of HRD allocation had been earmarked for sports during the Eighth Plan.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) the Central Government attaches a very high priority to sports in schools and Colleges. As per the recommendations of the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE), the State Govts/UTs have been advised to integrate sports and physical education with the educational system.

Catering in South Central Railway

1614. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to introduce a system for better catering in South Central Railways;

(b) whether it is a fact that the present system of catering has not been up to the mark;

(c) whether any positive action has been taken to improve catering on a time-bound programme; and

(d) if so, the details of such a schedule?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Improvement in Catering services is an ongoing process.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Measures taken by the SC Railway to improve quality of catering services include,—procurement of raw materials through standard sources, induction of professional Caterers, training of catering staff, rotation of menu, surprise checks/opinion polls and deterrent action against staff/contractors at fault.

Filling-up of vacancies in Bal Bhawan

1615. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bal Bhawan Society India invited applications in July, 1996 to fill up certain posts of Clerk-cum-Typists;

(b) if so, the number of applications received and the number of them found in order;

(c) whether the Bal Bhawan Society India has 50 posts in its organisation to fill up;

(d) whether any criteria and time schedule have been laid down for such selection; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) Applications for filling in vacant posts, including five posts of Lower Division Clerks, were invited in June, 1996.

(b) A total of 2829 applications were received for the posts of Lower Division Clerk of which 405 applicants were short-listed for written test. The posts of Lower Division Clerk have since been filled-up.

(c) No, Sir. The number of vacant posts, at present, are 24.

(d) and (e) Necessary action is being taken to fill-up these posts expeditiously in accordance with the prescribed procedure.

World-wide fund meet at Berlin

1616. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether at a World-Wide Fund Meet held in Berlin in October last, it was observed that "the last great stronghold of tiger in India is under siege by rich men who grind its bones to make their bread"; and

(b) if so, the specific observations and suggestions for protecting and promoting the tiger population in India made thereat and the aid offered or earmarked by the World-Wide Fund or its members for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (CAPT JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) No such observation was made at the WWF Annual Conference held in Berlin during October 21-25, 1996.

(b) The agenda for the above mentioned conference did not specifically include a discussion on the tiger situation in India. However, separate informal discussions did take place in which serious concern about the status of the tiger in India was expressed by several participants and the need for urgent action to address the situation was emphasised. Willingness to provide financial assistance was also expressed but no specific amount was earmarked or committed.

Coconut Plantations Affected by root Wilt disease

1617. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA-SWAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that root wilt disease has affected coconut plantations in Kerala and other parts of the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the root wilt disease has also been traced in Andhra Pradesh; and

(c) if so, whether ICAR is planning any steps to control this disease?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) The root wilt disease has affected coconut plantations in Kerala and some adjoining parts of Tamil Nadu.

(b) No such report has been received.

(c) the strategy developed by ICAR's Central Planatation Crops Research Institutes, Kasargod (Kerala) consists of systematic eradication of all palms in the advanced stage of disease and palms infected prior to flowering. Attempts are also being made to develop resistant/tolerant lines by identifying disease free palms in 'hot-spot' areas and utilising them in the breeding programme. Some F1 hydrids of coconut have shown field tolerance since last four years in 'hot-spots'.

New Strategy for Crop Production in 8th Plan

1618 SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have adopted any new strategy during the Eighth Plan to increase crop production;

(b) if so, the crop production exepcted to be achieved on implementation of these new strategies;

(c) the progress as on date; and

(d) the details of the new strategies?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) During the 8th Five Year Plan, a Cropping System Approach has been adopted for increasing the productivity of cereal crops.